What is claimed is:

1   1.   An image processing apparatus comprising:

2   a user authentication section that acquires ID information to

3   identify each user from among a plurality of users, and performs user

4   authentication based on said ID information;

5   an operation mode setting section that can selectively set,

6   as an operation mode that sets a work environment for operation inputs,

7   between an personal operation mode to permit each user to operate

8   individually and a public operation mode to permit an indefinite number

9   of users to operate; and

10   a mode switching section that, when a user is authenticated

11   in said user authentication section, switches said operation mode

12   from said public operation mode into said personal operation mode

13   for the authenticated user.

1   2.   The image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein

2   said mode switching section switches said operation mode from said

3   personal operation mode into said public operation mode based on a

4   prescribed condition with the state that a current operation mode

5   is set to said personal operation mode.

1   3.   The image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein

2   when ID information is not acquired for a period of time longer than

3   a predetermined time in said user authentication section, said mode

4   switching section switches said operation mode from said personal

5   operation mode into said public operation mode with the state that

6   a current operation mode is set to said personal operation mode.

1   4.   The image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further

2   comprising a human body detection section that detects a user located

3   in the vicinity of said image processing apparatus, wherein when a

4   human body has not been detected by said human body detection section

5   for a period of time longer than a predetermined time, said mode

6   switching section switches said operation mode from said personal

7   operation mode into said public operation mode with the state that

8   a current operation mode is set to said personal operation mode.

1   5.   The image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further

2   comprising a setting information acquisition section that acquires

3   setting information associated with each user, wherein said operation

4   mode setting section sets said personal operation mode based on said

5   setting information associated with the user authenticated in said

6   user authentication section.

1   6.   The image processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein

2   said ID information cooperates with login IDs in a network that can

3   be connected to said image processing apparatus, wherein said image

4   processing apparatus further comprises a personal information

5   processing section that performs the processing of personal

6   information relevant to the users corresponding to said ID information

7   existing on said network based on said ID information.

1   7.   A personal information management program adapted to be stored

2 in a computer-readable medium so as to perform the management of

3 personal information in an image processing apparatus shared by a

4 plurality of users, said personal information management program

5 serving to make a computer execute:

6   a user authentication step that acquires ID information to

7 identify each user from among a plurality of users, and performing

8 user authentication based on said ID information:

9   an operation mode setting step that selectively sets, as an

10 operation mode that sets a work environment for operation inputs,

11 between an personal operation mode to permit each user to operate

12 individually and a public operation mode to permit an indefinite number

13 of users to operate; and

14   a mode switching step that, when a user is authenticated in

15 said user authentication step, switches said operation mode from said

16 public operation mode into said personal operation mode for the

17 authenticated user.

1 8.   A personal information management program as set forth in claim

2 7, wherein in said mode switching step, said operation mode is switched

3 from said personal operation mode into said public operation mode

4 based on a prescribed condition with the state that a current operation

5 mode is set to said personal operation mode.

1 9.   The personal information management program as set forth in

2 claim 7, wherein in said mode switching step, when ID information

3 is not acquired for a period of time longer than a predetermined time

4 in said user authentication step, said operation mode is switched

5 from said personal operation mode into said public operation mode

6 with the state condition that a current operation mode is set to said

7 personal operation mode.

1 10. The personal information management program as set forth in

2 claim 7, further comprising a human body detection step for detecting

3 a user located in the vicinity of said image processing apparatus,

4 wherein in said mode switching step, when a human body has not been

5 detected in said human body detection step for a period of time longer

6 than a predetermined time, said operation mode is switched from said

7 personal operation mode into said public operation mode with the state

8 that a current operation mode is set to said personal operation mode.

1 11. The personal information management program as set forth in

2 claim 7, further comprising a setting information acquisition step

3 that acquires setting information associated with each user, wherein

4 in said operation mode setting step, said personal operation mode

5 is set based on said setting information associated with the user

6 authenticated in said user authentication step.

1 12. The personal information management program as set forth in

2 claim 7, wherein said ID information cooperates with login IDs in

3 a network that can be connected to said image processing apparatus,

4 wherein said personal information management program further

5 comprises a personal information processing step that performs the

6 processing of personal information relevant to the users corresponding

7 to said ID information existing on said network based on said ID

8   information.